



## Blue-billed Duck

<b>Name</b>	<b>Scientific</b>	<i>Oxyura australis</i>
	<b>Common</b>	Blue-billed Duck
<b>Description</b>		The male blue-billed duck has a black fan-like tail with pointed feathers. Its head is black and the rest of its body is chestnut in colour. In the breeding season his bill is bright pale blue. The female has black-brown feathers on the upper parts of the body with light brown mottling on the head and belly.
<b>Habitat</b>		Freshwater wetlands and swamps.
<b>What it feeds on</b>		Small <u>aquatic</u> animals (midge larvae, caddis fly larvae) and water plants.
<b>Where it feeds</b>		It dives underwater for its food.
<b>Breeding</b>		During courtships, male blue-billed ducks inflate their throats (like pigeons), and bounce on the water, sending waves outwards, then standing upright, skirt their tails rapidly like an eggbeater. Females build a nest with a domed roof of dead rushes among the rushes. Lots of grey down from her body is used to line the nest where 5 or 6 eggs are laid and <u>incubated</u> for about 25 days. The ducklings can swim and dive soon after hatching and feed themselves although keeping close to the female. After 2 months, the ducklings are feathered and able to fly.
<b>Did you know?</b>		Blue-billed ducks mostly fly at night. They prefer to dive and escape, or, like the coot, fly and paddle rapidly along the surface of the water.

